



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

## LANGUAGE POLICY

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### Related documents

<b>UJ documents</b> (e.g. Policies, Regulations, Guidelines, Contracts)	<b>Other</b> (e.g. Legislation, DoE and HEQC directives and guidelines)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>UJ Vision, Mission and Values;</b></li> <li>• <b>UJ Institutional Statute, 2012</b></li> <li>• <b>Code of Academic and Research Ethics;</b></li> <li>• <b>Student Recruitment and Selection Policy;</b></li> <li>• <b>Recruitment Strategy;</b></li> <li>• <b>Teaching and Learning Policy;</b></li> <li>• <b>Policy on Quality Management;</b></li> <li>• <b>Programme Policy;</b></li> <li>• <b>Assessment Policy;</b></li> <li>• <b>Policy on Higher Degrees and Postgraduate Studies;</b></li> <li>• <b>Admission Policy.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act (Act 108 of 1996);</b></li> <li>• <b>South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (Act 58 of 1995);</b></li> <li>• <b>Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997);</b></li> <li>• <b>National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996);</b></li> <li>• <b>Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012);</b></li> <li>• <b>Ministry of Education: National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa: February 2001;</b></li> <li>• <b>Ministry of Education: Language Policy for Higher Education 2003;</b></li> <li>• <b>The Development of Indigenous African Languages as mediums of</b></li> </ul>

	<p>instruction in Higher Education 2003;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher Education Qualifications Sub- Framework (HEQSF): Government Gazette Vol. 578, August 2013;</li> <li>• Ministry of Education: Higher Education Qualification Framework: August 2005;</li> <li>• Minimum Admission Requirements: Government Gazette, No. 27961, August 2005.</li> </ul>
Stakeholders affected by this document (units and divisions who should be familiar with it):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Members;</li> <li>• All University Employees;</li> <li>• Students;</li> <li>• External stakeholders (e.g. visitors, schools, prospective students).</li> </ul>
Website address of this document:	Intranet

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# LANGUAGE POLICY

## 1. PREAMBLE

The University of Johannesburg's (UJ) Language Policy follows section 27(2) of the Higher Education Act (1997) which requires higher education institutions to develop and publish a language policy. UJ subscribes to a multilingual ethos where the linguistic diversity of the Gauteng province is acknowledged and conditions created to support successful teaching, constructive and meaningful academic discourse, and effective institutional governance and communication.

## 2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Language Policy is aligned with four major languages policy imperatives as prescribed in the Language Policy for Higher Education (LPHE) (2002):

- 2.1 the designation of the language(s) of instruction;
- 2.2 the future of the indigenous languages as fields of academic study and research and the need for higher education to create "a multilingual environment in which all our languages are developed as academic/scientific languages" (par. 6);
- 2.3 the promotion of the study of foreign languages (par. 17.1); and
- 2.4 the promotion of institutional multilingual policies and practices.

## 3. SCOPE

This policy has institution-wide application.

## 4. ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

African indigenous languages	IsiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, SeSotho sa Leboa, Setswana, SiSwati, TshiVenda, XiTsonga. ( <i>Language Policy for Higher Education, 2002</i> )
Career-based basic conversational language	The ability to have a conversation in a colloquial language in a specific career capacity.
Conversational fluency	The ability to have a conversation in a colloquial language.
Foreign languages	Includes, but not limited to, languages commonly used by communities in South Africa, such as German, Greek, Portuguese, French and Hindi. ( <i>Language Policy for Higher Education, 2002</i> )
Functional multilingualism	The choice of a language in a specific situation and according to the context, i.e. the function, audience and message for which it is used.
LPHE	Language Policy for Higher Education (2002)

Multilingual	Using more than one language by individuals or a group of people.
Primary language speaker	Mother-tongue language speaker.
UJ Designated languages	SeSotho sa Leboa, English, isiZulu, Afrikaans. ( <i>UJ Institutional Statute, 2012</i> )

## 5. PRINCIPLES

The UJ Language Policy is informed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act (Act 108 of 1996), the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997), the Language Policy for Higher Education (2003), the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012), the UJ Institutional Statute (2012) and the University of Johannesburg's vision, mission and strategic goals and objectives.

The Language Policy is based on the following principles:

- 5.1 The recognition of:
  - 5.1.1 the rich multilingual nature of the Gauteng region;
  - 5.1.2 the notion of functional multilingualism where the choice of using a particular language is determined by different contexts such as the purpose and nature of language use and communication;
  - 5.1.3 the multilingual repertoires of students and staff as resources for effective teaching and learning;
  - 5.1.4 the important role of language in promoting human dignity, and the transformation process required to build a free and just democracy;
  - 5.1.5 the need to cultivate a spirit of respect and inclusiveness in matters relating to language;
  - 5.1.6 the need to develop and study indigenous African languages as fields of academic study.

## 6. POLICY STATEMENT

- 6.1 Designated Languages:  
Given the University's geographical context and reflecting our commitment to promoting multilingualism in the context of higher education, Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho), English, isiZulu (Zulu) and Afrikaans are designated as primary languages (Article 9, UJ Institutional Statute, 2012). The institutional use of these languages will be guided by the principle of functional multilingualism as elaborated upon in the Language Policy Implementation Plan.
- 6.2 Languages of Instruction:
  - 6.2.1 All approved modules and programmes are offered in English, and wherever possible and reasonably practicable, will also be offered in the other three designated languages.
  - 6.2.2 UJ will adopt comprehensive measures to ensure that students have access to English academic literacy courses to facilitate the use of English as a tool for teaching and learning, and for professional purposes.
- 6.3 Working Language(s):
  - 6.3.1 English is the primary language of internal governance, administration, marketing, and internal and external communication.

- 6.3.2 The use of the other three designated languages in these areas will be promoted as far as reasonably practicable with due consideration of the nature of the target audience, and the availability of human and other applicable resources.
- 6.3.3 The use of any particular language(s) must not serve as a barrier to participation in official institutional governance and communication.
- 6.3.4 The University is committed to promoting multilingual awareness and positive language attitudes among its students and staff. The measures to enhance this awareness as detailed in the Language Policy Implementation Plan will be thus be implemented.
- 6.3.5 The University's linguistic landscape will support the institution's multilingual ethos. Measures, including multilingual signage, will be detailed in the Language Policy Implementation Plan in line with the notion of functional multilingualism.
- 6.4 Future of Designated Languages:
  - 6.4.1 Conditions will be created for the ongoing and systematic elaboration / intellectualisation of isiZulu, Sesotho sa Leboa and the continued elaboration of Afrikaans as academic languages and languages of science.
  - 6.4.2 Strategies and support mechanisms for ongoing and systematic elaboration / intellectualisation will be included in the Language Policy Implementation Plan. This includes the systematic development of terminology lists per discipline / sub-discipline, and the translation into the designated languages of seminal scientific and literary works and textbooks in prioritised programmes / modules.
- 6.5 Foreign Languages:
  - 6.5.1 The study of foreign languages as academic subjects will be encouraged, in particular those languages that are important for the promotion of South Africa's cultural, trade and diplomatic relations, and languages commonly used by communities in the region.
- 6.6 A student who is a primary language speaker of any of the other designated UJ languages other than English will be assisted as follows where necessary and practicable in any of the other three languages:
  - 6.6.1 provision of basic information about the module, such as information pertaining to contact times and assessments;
  - 6.6.2 assistance with understanding academic records and administrative information.
- 6.7 Qualifications leading to careers which require the ability to interact professionally in one of South Africa's indigenous languages are assisted with career-based basic conversational language fluency in at least one of the UJ designated languages (other than English) in a phased manner as approved by the relevant faculty board.
- 6.8 UJ has a Language Unit that offers support in collaboration with faculties and divisions. The reporting line of the Language Unit is determined by the Management Executive Committee.
- 6.9 The University offers staff and students opportunities to acquire conversational fluency in the four UJ designated languages.
- 6.10 The execution of the Language Policy is in accordance with UJ's Language Implementation Plan which reflects the University's specific strategies for the promotion of multilingualism.

**7. EVALUATION**

Progress reports on the implementation of the Language Policy are monitored by the Management Executive Committee, the Institutional Forum, Senate and Council.

**8. REVIEW**

The Language Policy is reviewed at least every five years.